discontinuation of the subsidy in future which is being given by Government in the field of higher education;

(b) if so, whether any decision has been taken by Government on the basis of the said announcement; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. VALLABHBHAI RAMJIBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) to (c) Government considers the amount spent on higher education as an investment in human resource development and there is no proposal to reduce it.The Prime Minister of India in his speech at the time of inauguration of the Golden Jubilee Ceremony of UGC emphasized the need for revision of fee structure in higher education.

Ecological Impact of sand mining

411. SHRI CO. POULOSE: Will the Minister of OCEAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has been conducted to ascertain the ecological impact of sand mining in the coastal sea beds;

(b) if so, the names of agencies with expertise to conduct such studies in the country;

(c) the details of the study report thereto;

(d) whether Government have received any proposal for sand mining in the coastal sea beds from any State Government;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the details of steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

(f) Does not arise.

Promotion of tourism by 'Palace on Wheels'

†412.SHRI RK.MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the position of the train namely 'Palace on Wheels' introduced with a view to encouraging tourism and the number of such trains running;

(b) whether a few more such trains have been planned to be introduced; and

(c) the reasons for not introducing the Palace on Wheels proposed by the Government of Maharashtra as yet and the status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) TheFe are two luxury tourist trains *viz.* the 'Palace on Wheels' and the 'Royal Orient Express' introduced to encourage tourism.The "Palace on Wheels' has become a popular luxury tourist train.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The coaches of the train are presently being manufactured. The project is to be commissioned by the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC).

Railway power generation plants

413. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are actively considering installation its own power generation plants in order to partly meet their requirements in running the Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.